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ABSTRACT

This meta-evaluation sought to evaluate the personnel, procedures, and impact of a statewide evaluation system. Personnel evaluation provided both formative and summative information, as well as information pertaining to future selection of evaluation personnel. The evaluation of procedures led to many revisions and refinements in the procedures and instrumentation of the evaluation system. The impact study supplied data to indicate data that the evaluation system did have considerable impact in bringing about changes and improvements in local plans. Significant side effects included the reorganization of State Educational Organization (SEA) consultant services. In addition to meeting the informational needs for revision of the system in Illinois, the meta-evaluation has yielded data to justify the retention of the three-phase system in future years. (Author/CK)

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META - EVALUATION APPLIED

The evaluation of a large scale evaluation system

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META-EVALUATION APPLIED: THE EVALUATION OF A LARGE SCALE EVALUATION SYSTEM

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Invariably when an expenditure is made, especially a large one, there exists a coinciding need, and often times requirement, for an evaluation of that expenditure. Evaluators will be the first to express this need; however, evaluators and their funding agents often fail to realize the need to assess the efficiency or merit of their own evaluative efforts. Worthen (1972) upholds this contention and states that, "only a small portion of evaluation studies are ever evaluated, even in the most perfunctory fashion."

Scriven (1969) has termed this second-order evaluation "meta-evaluation." Meta-evaluation has been discussed and applied in several instances at the Ohio State University Evaluation Center. Guba and Stufflebeam (1968) have suggested criteria for meta-evaluation.

The purpose of the meta-evaluation described herein was to assess, formatively and summatively, a state-wide system for evaluating the occupational education programs of local evaluation agencies (LEAs).

Background--Description of Evaluation System

The evaluation system under consideration is entitled the Three Phase System for Statewide Evaluation of Occupational Education Programs (TPS). This system was designed and field tested during the 1970-71 school year and was fully implemented within 71 local educational agencies (LEAs)--secondary and post-secondary--during the 1971-72 school year. Evaluation was warranted by the fact that Illinois distributes over 30 million dollars of state and federal funds annually to approximately 600 LEAs for the operation of local vocational programs. The three goals

of the TPS are the: 1) improvement of programs, 2) accountability of state and federal funds, and 3) facilitation of state-level planning.

The specifics of the TPS will not be presented in this paper (cf. Wentling and Klit, 1973, 1973b, 1972a, 1972b for further description.) However, a summary of the TPS will be presented to aid in the description of the meta-evaluation.

The Illinois Evaluation System comprises three phases. The first phase involves the staff of LEAs, whose task is the evaluation and planning of a program which is well suited to their students. The key to Phase One is efficient, locally-directed evaluation and careful planning, culminating not only in the updating and upgrading of vocational offerings but in a planning document for each LEA within the state. This local plan, which is completed annually and submitted to the State Education Agency (SEA), later serves as a contractual agreement between the LEA and the SEA to justify and to determine funding.

Following its preparation and subsequent review by the LEA governing board, the Local Plan is forwarded to the SEA and Phase Two begins. During Phase Two, SEA personnel review and evaluate each Local Plan, recommending approval or nonapproval of the projected occupational program. Each local agency is measured against what the SEA staff considers to be a reasonable estimate of that LEA's potential within its own surroundings.

Phase Three consists of two or three day on-site evaluations of a selected number of LEAs each year. During Phase Three, a team of indi-

viduals assesses the total occupational program of the LEA and makes specific suggestions for improvement. For the purpose of Phase Three, a total program is conceived as comprising eight components, or areas of concern: Administrative Organization, Personnel, Objectives, Evaluation, Occupational Programs, Resources Utilized, Guidance Services, and Students Served. The evaluation team focuses on these components in their analysis of an LEA's program.

Evaluation Personnel

A team of individuals is selected from outside the LEA's district to gather and analyze information concerning the total occupational program offerings of the district. Team members are selected by the SEA from three groups of individuals: 1) practicing educators, 2) business, industrial, or labor representatives, and 3) former students. The evaluation team is headed by a team leader who has a contract with the SEA to conduct three on-site evaluations per year. The group of team leaders includes representatives of secondary, post secondary (community college), and university level institutions.

On-Site Visitation Procedures

All third phase procedures are categorized into 6 stages which will become the focal points for the meta-evaluation. A brief description of each stage is warranted.

Stage One--Previsitation preparation includes the selection and notification of LEAs for visitation. During this phase team members are selected, team leaders are trained, and LEA officials are requested

to furnish team members with a copy of their Local Plan and other descriptive information regarding the LEA.

Stage Two--LEA personnel orientation involves the presentation by an SEA staff member of a 30 minute slide/tape review of the evaluation system. This presentation, occurring five weeks prior to a visit, describes the purpose and procedures of the evaluation. During the orientation session, an SEA staff member administers a questionnaire (Preliminary Evaluation Instrument) to all staff members present. A similar questionnaire is also administered to a 15% sample of the occupational student body. The results of these questionnaires are mailed to each team member prior to the visitation.

Stage Three--Team orientation. Each visit begins with the orientation of the team by the team leader. During the orientation session, the team members are introduced to their role as evaluators and the group reviews the previously provided information concerning the LEA.

Stage Four--Team exploration begins with the chief school administrator's description of the LEA's local program, available resources, and plans for the future. Following the initial meeting the team begins its primary task--interviewing. The focus of all interviews is on assessing the Eight Areas of Concern; and the Team Member Handbook provides a guide to this task. Students, occupational staff, nonoccupational staff, administrators, supportive personnel, the advisory committee, and other community representatives are interviewed in the team's quest for information.

Stage Five--Preparation of the evaluation report requires a joint effort on the part of all team members. The report represents a consensus of the team's evaluation of collected information. The heart of the report is a written set of specific conclusions, recommendations, and suggested actions for each of the eight areas of concern.

Stage Six--The summary conference is scheduled to occur at the conclusion of the report preparation stage. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the team leader to personally present the findings of the team to the LEA personnel. Upon completion of the summary conference, the evaluation report is forwarded to the SEA for duplication. Within three weeks, copies are returned to the LEA for distribution to LEA staff, Board of Education, and advisory committees.

The evaluation report prepared during each phase three visit becomes a primary source of ideas for future planning and developmental activity to be carried on in Phase One. A key feature of the Illinois Evaluation System is the built-in follow-up of local changes via the assessment of subsequent local plans which are submitted annually by the LEA.

As conceived for this project, the purposes of the meta-evaluation were to: 1) determine the performance, as perceived by various groups of individuals, of personnel involved in executing the evaluation system, 2) assess the effectiveness of the procedures and instrumentation of the TPS, and 3) determine the impact of the TPS in terms of change and improvements in the Local Plans of LEAs. To accomplish these purposes the meta-evaluation was completed by conducting three related studies.

STUDY ONE--EVALUATION OF PERSONNEL

Sample

To acquire data for the evaluation of the personnel responsible for directing on-site visitations (team leaders), an attempt was made to solicit responses from all individuals who had contact with the evaluation system. Included in the sample were 226 administrators and 1,365 instructional and supportive personnel from within the 71 LEAs which had been evaluated. In addition, input was derived from questionnaires administered to 299 evaluation team members and each of 7 regional directors for each visitation within their region, while others in the sample were included only once.

Instrumentation

Four questionnaires were utilized to elicit ratings of evaluation personnel. These questionnaires also contained items which related to the evaluation of procedures and instruments that were utilized in the TPS. Four questionnaires served dually in Study One (personnel evaluation) and in Study Two (procedure evaluation). The titles of the four forms, their audience and their corresponding number of items were:

FORM TR -- LEA TEACHERS AND SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL --	35 items
FORM AD -- LEA ADMINISTRATORS --	31 items
FORM TM -- EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS --	41 items
FORM RD -- STATE EMPLOYED REGIONAL DIRECTORS --	21 items

Each questionnaire, printed on a different color paper, contained items of an agreement type with a scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree--all concluded with a request for additional comments

and suggestions for improvement of the TPS.

Instrument items were based on a delineation of duties or task analysis of team leaders--and of each procedure of the TPS. Personnel evaluation items were categorized as they pertained to either the team leader's performance or the team's performance. This categorization led to the establishment of 3 subscores; (i) team leader rating, (ii) team rating, and (iii) a combination of the two to form an overall team rating.

Items pertaining to the procedural evaluation were categorized into the six stages of the TPS. The reporting of stage scores will be described further within the report of Study Two.

Design and Procedure

There were three purposes of the personnel evaluation which were met with the synthesis and analysis of information gathered by a questionnaire survey. These were to: 1) provide formative evaluative information to team leaders, 2) provide the directors of the TPS with a summative evaluation of team leaders, and 3) determine future selection criteria by conducting an investigation of the experiencial background of successful team leaders.

A set of instruments, forms AD and TR, was mailed to the chief school administrator of each evaluated LEA. He was requested to administer the instruments to his staff and to return them by mail to the meta-evaluation staff. This was accomplished within four to six weeks following the on-site visit to the LEA.

In addition to the survey of LEA personnel, each team member was mailed a copy of Form TM and a thank-you letter for serving on an

evaluation team. Regional directors completed a copy of Form RD for each visitation in which they were involved. Follow-up of non-respondents led to a 100 percent return from LEAs and regional directors. A return of 89 percent was achieved for team members.

Formative evaluation. To meet with the purpose of formative evaluation, summaries for each form of the data collection instrument were mailed to each team leader. Summaries included response summaries for each item which pertained to the team leader's or his team's performance. Also, subscore 1, subscore 2, and a total score were provided. Mean subscores for all team leaders combined were also given to provide a norm from which a team leader could compare his performance.

Summative evaluation. Subscores utilized in the formative evaluation of personnel were also used in the summative evaluation. Team leader scores (subscore 1) were standardized and combined, and each team leader was ranked. An attempt was made to verify the low-ranking team leaders' poor performance. More information was collected from personal interviews with regional directors in this verification. Additionally, the completed questionnaires relative to each of the five poorest team leaders were examined to identify any open comments which may have been made by those surveyed regarding the performance of the team leader.

Investigation of Selected Criteria. A third step in the personnel evaluation involved the investigation of the previous qualifications and experience of successful team leaders. It was thought that this information would be useful in tne future selection of team leaders. Two separate

one-way Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVA) were performed. The first considered the type of institution in which team leaders were currently employed as the independent variable. This variable was classified by three levels: secondary schools, community colleges, and universities. The second analysis considered type of position held by team leaders as the independent variable. Type of position incorporated four levels: instructional personnel, vocational directors, deans, and chief school administrators. The dependent variables in each analysis were the team leader subscores for each of the four forms of the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

Formative Evaluation of Personnel. The formative personnel evaluation resulted in the feedback of questionnaire responses and their combined subscores to team leaders. A summary was provided for each questionnaire form. This information was presented in the following format:

FORM TM (TEAM MEMBER) FOR D. ALLEN

SA	A	D	SD	n	x		
00	08	38	54	13	3.46	1	The team leader was too domineering during the evaluation
92	08	00	00	13	3.92	2	The team leader was an excellent leader
						.	
						.	
						.	
69	31	00	00	13	3.69	41	The team leader solicited ideas and comments from all team members

Your Subscore 1 = 3.37
Your Subscore 2 = 3.33
Your Total Score = 3.35

Subscore 1 Includes those items directly related to the team leader (Items 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 41)

Subscore 2 Includes those items directly related to team members (Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 14)

Total Combines subscores 1 and 2 to give an overall team rating

Average for all team leaders combined.

Subscore 1 = 3.32
Subscore 2 = 3.33
Total 3.32

Sample size equal to 299

These summaries were intended to reveal to the team leader how specific aspects of his performance were perceived by the various groups of individuals. Ideally, this information would aid the team leaders in identifying and remedying their weaknesses.

Summative Evaluation of Personnel. Summative evaluation of personnel was conducted to identify both strengths and weaknesses of team leaders. In addition to the data provided by the questionnaire survey, observation by SEA staff and informal feedback by local personnel to the SEA via telephone, personal contact and letter, all contributed to decision making regarding the summative evaluation and subsequent retention of team leaders. Team leaders who were rated highly by LEA, SEA, and team members were utilized in the future training of team leaders via simulation experiences.

Summative results also revealed weaknesses in team leader performance which were somewhat universal. This, in many instances, led to the consideration of specific skills in future team leader training sessions.

Finally, summative information led to the elimination of three low ranking team leaders for the current evaluation year.

Investigation of Selection Criteria. The first one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance sought to determine if team leaders from one background were rated higher than individuals from a different background. Individuals from three types of institutions were compared; secondary institutions, community colleges, and universities. Multivariate results were not significant ($F = .70$, $p < .30$); consequently no further analysis was performed.

The second analysis considered the type of position held by team leaders (i.e., instructional, vocational director, community college dean, and chief school administrator) as the independent variable with the ratings from forms TR, AD, TM, and RD as criterion measures. This second MANOVA also failed to yield significance ($F = 1.42$, $p < .12$).

These results did not reveal one type of person as superior to others in terms of ratings by various groups involved with the evaluation system.

STUDY TWO--EVALUATION OF PROCEDURES

Sample and Instrumentation

The sample and instruments described for Study One overlapped those of Study Two. In addition to Forms AD, TR, TM, and RD, a similar form, FORM TL, consisting of 38 items, was constructed to elicit the opinions of team leaders relative to the procedures and data gathering instruments of the TPS. A 100 percent return was achieved from the 25 team leaders.

Design and Procedure

In addition to providing data for personnel evaluation, the questionnaire survey provided input to the evaluation of procedures and data gathering instruments utilized in the on-site visitations. Questionnaire items were

written to elicit information pertaining to each of the six stages of Phase Three of the TPS. Results were summarized according to these stages. The results of items pertaining to each stage were mailed to four of the team leaders; each team leader receiving the results of one stage. For example, team leaders A, B, C, and D received the results of items pertaining to Stage 1--the orientation of LEA personnel. A number of items occured on more than one form. In this case the responses for each form were provided to team leaders. Below are examples of the two items in the format through which they were reported.

Form	#	SA	A	D	SD	OMIT	$\bar{x}$	σ	
TM	5	.33	.57	.06	.02	.02	1.77	.65	THE INTERVIEW HANDBOOK WAS OF HELP IN ORGANIZING INTERVIEWS.
TL	6	.54	.36	.03	.02	.05	1.50	.66	
TL	2	.05	.25	.39	.30	.02	2.95	.87	TEAM MEMBERS WHO INTERVIEWED EDUCATORS DIDN'T USE THE INTERVIEW HANDBOOK.
TM	39	.00	.12	.57	.24	.06	3.12	.63	
RD	3	.00	.30	.58	.11	.01	2.81	.62	

The results pertaining to each stage were mailed to the team leaders, who were instructed to analyze the information and to integrate their personal experiences relative to their specific stage. Four weeks subsequent to this mailing, a three-day workshop was held in which each team leader participated. Fifty percent of the time available in this team leader workshop was devoted to the analysis and discussion of the evaluation procedures and instrumentation. Six groups of team leaders were provided copies of comments which were made on the completed forms of questionnaires. The six groups worked independently, synthesizing questionnaire summaries, questionnaire comments, and their personal experiences, for seven hours. Small group activity culminated in

recommendations and suggestions for improving the components of each stage; these recommendations were presented to the entire group of team leaders and SEA staff members for consideration and discussion.

Results and Discussion

The data from questionnaires which pertained to procedural stages, comments which were made by questionnaire respondents, and the personal experiences of team leaders allowed for the careful analysis of the evaluation system. The outcome of this analysis was a report, prepared by the team leaders, which identified both exemplary and deficient attributes of each stage of the evaluation process. In addition, specific recommendations were made relative to improving the existing procedures. The final report identified many needed improvements. This paper will present only several examples and their consequential action.

One major need identified by the meta-evaluation was for the standardization of procedure among visitations. It was recommended that each step in the visit and each of the team leader duties be specifically delineated. The resulting action on the part of the TPS staff was the development of a Team Leader Handbook (DVTE, 1972) which outlines each task within a specified time frame.

A second major concern which was revealed by the meta-evaluation related to the means in which the overall rating for each area of concern was presented in the LEA evaluation report. This was changed for the 1972-73 school year and the meta-evaluation study in progress for this year has revealed the need for further improvement.

Another example of deficiency in the TPS was the instrumentation utilized in data collection. The Preliminary Evaluation Instruments administered to staff and students prior to a visitation, the School and Community Data Form, and the Team Member Handbook were all revised on the basis of the meta-evaluation.

STUDY THREE--EVALUATION OF IMPACT

Sample

A stratified random sample of LEAs was drawn for the impact evaluation. A total of 40 LEAs were selected: 10 large unevaluated, 10 small unevaluated LEAs, 10 large evaluated, and 10 small evaluated.

Procedure

The impact study sought to assess the efficacy of the TPS in terms of bringing about change and improvement in the Local Plans of LEAs. Data collection for Study Three involved the analysis of annually-submitted planning documents (Local Plans) of 20 evaluated and 20 unevaluated LEAs for a two-year period. The 1971-72 school year plans (submitted prior to implementation of the TPS) and the plans of 1972-73 were reviewed concurrently to identify all changes which had been made in the plans. Those plans were reviewed by a person knowledgeable of local plan composition but naive to the classification or strata from which the plans had been drawn. Changes were recorded, regardless of their magnitude or significance, onto 3 x 5 cards--one card for each change. Change information was later coded as to strata and Area of Concern to which it pertained, and was punched onto data processing cards.

The change cards were printed on a computer output form which included a Likert rating scale for each change. Copies of the printout were presented to 9 judges who were instructed to rate each change with regard to its importance in improving a local program. Judges' scores were summed, and a mean value was calculated for each change. These mean scores were subsequently utilized as item scores while categories of change--the original Areas of Concern--were considered subtests which resulted in subscores. These subscores, eight in all, became the dependent variables for the statistical analysis.

Design

It was the intention of the impact study to determine if evaluated institutions reflected more significant changes in their most recent local plan than did unevaluated LEAs. The study was also constructed to determine if size of LEA had an effect on the amount of change in Local Plans. Therefore, evaluated and unevaluated LEAs--institutions both under and over 600 enrollment--were analyzed via a 2 x 2 (evaluation x size) factorial design. Change subscores, one for each of the eight areas of concern, were analyzed as dependent variables by utilizing Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). MANOVA was most expedient in that it not only provided the contribution of each main effect to each dependent variable separately, but simultaneously tested the concommittant effects to each dependent variable. Further, where the MANOVA illuminated significance, differences were investigated by fitting discriminant functions to the dependent variables to attribute the Multivariate differences.

Results and Discussion

The 2 x 2 Multivariate Analysis of Variance, utilizing change subscores as dependent variables, led to significance for the EVALUATION main effect. Multivariate, univariate, and step down analysis results are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Test of Significance Comparing Evaluated and Unevaluated LEAs on Change Subscores

Dependent Variable	Univariate F (df_h=1, df_e = 36)	Step-down F (df_h=1, df_e = 36)	Multivariate F (df_h = 8, df_e = 29)
Admin. Organization	4.95*	4.95*	
Personnel	10.44*	7.43*	
Objectives	1.64	.28	
Evaluation	3.08	.84	3.13
Occ. Programs	6.32*	3.84	$p < .01$
Resources Utilized	12.80*	2.52	
Guidance	9.81*	.45	
Students Served	3.81	1.84	

*$p < .05$

LEAs which had been evaluated incorporated more significant changes in their Local Plan than did unevaluated LEAs ($F=3.13$, $p < .01$). The variables primarily responsible for the significant EVALUATION effect were Administrative Organization (step down $F = 4.95$, $p < .03$) and Personnel (step down $F = 7.43$, $p < .01$). A discriminant function was applied to the results in an attempt to assess the contributors to the difference between the evaluated and unevaluated agencies. The function was:

$$Y_1 = .18x_1 = .31x_2 + .01x_3 + .10x_4 + .41x_5 + .39x_6 + .25x_7 + .39x_8$$

or

$$Y_1 = .18 \text{ (Admin. Org.)} + .31 \text{ (Personnel)} + .01 \text{ (Objectives)} + .10 \text{ (Evaluation)} + .41 \text{ (Occupational Programs)} + .39 \text{ (Resources)} + .25 \text{ (Guidance)} + .39 \text{ (Students Served)}$$

This function is based on low scores on objectives and evaluation and on higher scores for occupational programs, resources utilized, and students served.

On the other main effect, SIZE, Multivariate results were not statistically significant ($F = 1.79$, $p < .12$). Table 2 summarizes Multivariate, Univariate, and step down analysis results for the SIZE effect.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Large and Small LEAs on Change Scores

Dependent Variable	Univariate F (df_h=1, df_e= 36)	Step-down F (df_h=1, df_e= 36)	Multivariate F (df_h= 8, df_e= 29)
Admin. Org.	2.48	2.48	
Personnel	6.15*	4.73*	
Objectives	.01	.33	
Evaluation	2.69	1.75	1.79
Occ. Programs	4.13*	3.23	$p < .12$
Resources Utilized	.16	.59	
Guidance	.23	.72	
Students	.86	.24	

*$p < .05$

The step down analysis revealed that the existing variance was embedded in the personnel subscore. Even though the size main effect was not statistically significant ($p. < .12$), closer analysis of cell means revealed higher scores for large over smaller LEAs on each dependent variable. The interaction of SIZE and EVALUATION main effects was non-significant.

The results of the impact study illuminated several factors important to the directors of the TPS. First, it has determined that the desired changes in plans, or intended improvements, are in evidence. Since local plans are, in essence, contractual agreements, it can be assumed that changes in plans will result in changes within operational programs of LEAs.

The fact that little change was identified in both statement of objectives and in locally-directed evaluation has implications for future activity for the SEA. This finding, coupled with the fact that objectives and evaluation were lowest rated areas in LEA evaluation reports, confirms the need for a closer look at these areas and a possible reallocation of state resources, both fiscal and personnel, toward the upgrading of these areas.

The lack of significance for the SIZE effect and the interaction of size and evaluation effects are also of interest. It was hypothesized by TPS personnel that more change would occur in smaller LEAs due to smaller staffs and larger amounts of control by administrative staff members. The meta-evaluation findings did not uphold this hypothesis. A future follow-up of the LEAs will identify actual changes in programs and may prove to be different for large and small LEAs.

SUMMARY

This meta-evaluation sought to evaluate the personnel, procedures, and impact of a statewide evaluation system. Personnel evaluation provided both formative and summative information, as well as information pertaining to future selection of evaluation personnel. The evaluation of procedures led to many revisions and refinements in the procedures and instrumentation of the evaluation system. The impact study supplied data to indicate that the evaluation system did have considerable impact in bringing about changes and improvements in local plans.

Coincident to meeting the purposes of the meta-evaluation was the observation of many side effects of the evaluation system. Possibly one of the most significant outcomes of the evaluation system was the involvement of people--educators, business representatives, and students--in a common effort. This common effort was the occasion for in-service education as a discipline; and provided an excellent opening to dialogue between school and community.

Other significant side effects included the reorganization of SEA consultant services. Current services are offered and almost automatically provided to LEAs which have been evaluated. This procedure differs greatly from the traditional system under which LEAs were required to request state services. Revision of pre-service and in-service education programs offered by institutions of higher education within the state is another of the many side benefits of the evaluation system.

The investment in a meta-evaluation has reaped many benefits for the SEA in Illinois. In addition to meeting the informational needs for revision of the system, the meta-evaluation has yielded data to justify the retention of the TPS in future years.

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